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## THE BOOK OF THE DEAD.

*The Book of the Dead. The Chapters of Coming Forth by Day. The Egyptian Text according to the Theban recension in hieroglyphic edited from numerous papyri, with a translation, vocabulary, &c.* By E. A. Wallis Budge, Litt.D., D.Litt., F.S.A., Keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum. In three volumes. Pp. cciv + 354; xl + 517; vii + 386. (London: Kegan Paul, 1898.)

IN the first of the Gifford Lectures for 1896, Prof. Tiele gave an admirable sketch of the method of work which the student of the modern science of religion must pursue if he is to achieve any lasting results. The process is a long one, for he must acquaint himself with the whole field of religion and be master of the material with which he works; and he should, in the Professor's opinion, have taken part himself in exploring and clearing the ground, and have studied at least two religions in the original sources. We fear that for many workers in this comparatively recent field of study the lecturer's words came as a counsel of perfection. But even working by Prof. Tiele's high standard, the range of study is so broad that the student of religion can obtain only a small proportion of his information at first hand, and for the greater part of his material must make use of the labours of others; in the wider field of anthropology, which in one sense includes the science of religion—though Prof. Tiele would not here agree with us—the range of study is still more extensive. For information respecting the culture, customs and beliefs of savage and undeveloped races of the present day, the student must consult the works of travellers, missionaries, and trained collectors and explorers; while for the beliefs of the ancient nations of the world, he necessarily to a great extent depends on the translations made by scholars who have devoted their energies to the interpretation of the sacred books and documents that have come down to us. Prof. Max Müller's "Sacred Books of the East," for example, supply him with ample material in his examination of the beliefs of the ancient Aryan races; though it must be admitted the religious works of many other ancient nations still need trustworthy translations. The want of such a translation of the great religious work of the ancient Egyptians has long been felt, but it is now met by Dr. Wallis Budge's translation of the "Book of the Dead."

The importance of the "Book of the Dead" in its bearings on the religion of the ancient Egyptians cannot be over-estimated. Including as it does their whole system of belief, it is our principal source of information on the subject. It is true that collections of moral precepts, hymns and prayers to the gods, mythological texts and legends, all contribute something to our knowledge; but the collection of compositions, to which the title "Book of the Dead" has been applied, is in itself the embodiment of the Egyptian's creed, and from it alone can any true understanding of his religion be obtained. For many years the work was known only in publications of single papyri of different periods, the most important of which was that published in 1842 by

Lepsius, whose numbering of the chapters has been retained by all subsequent editors. It was not until more than thirty years later that any complete edition of the work was contemplated. In 1874, at a meeting of the International Congress of Orientalists, a scheme for such an edition was projected, and M. Naville undertook the work. Confining himself to papyri of the eighteenth to the twentieth dynasties, during which period the finest papyri of the "Book of the Dead" were written, he in 1886 produced a critical edition of the Theban recension of the work, which he published with an introduction but no translation. In the new edition of the work just issued, Dr. Budge has added considerably to M. Naville's text by using some unique papyri—which have been acquired during recent years by the British Museum. In another volume he has published a complete vocabulary to the text, which will prove of great service to Egyptologists. But the volume which marks the greatest advance on previous editions, and with which we are here concerned, is the one in which Dr. Budge gives a complete translation of the text, a work that has long been needed, but which he is the first to have accomplished; the translation is preceded by an introduction, in which he deals with the origin, aim and contents of the "Book of the Dead," and states the conclusions at which he has arrived as the result of many years of study.

The many points suggested by such a work cannot be adequately treated within the limits of a review, and it will be necessary to confine our attention to certain parts of the introduction where Dr. Budge has developed his theories with regard to the "Book of the Dead." One of the most important chapters of the introduction is that devoted to the history of the "Book of the Dead." The four main recensions of the work have long been recognised by scholars, that of the Old and Middle Empires, the Theban version, the version of the twentieth dynasty, and the text of the Saïte and Ptolemaic periods. Dr. Budge, however, strikes out a novel line in his sketch in the history of the work, by going back beyond the time of the pyramid-builders of the fifth and sixth dynasties, and seeking in the remains of prehistoric Egypt the causes that led to the subsequent development of the work. In the graves recently excavated at El-'Amrah near Abydos, which possibly belonged not to the Egyptians themselves, but to their predecessors in the land, were found skeletons showing traces indicating that the bodies to which they belonged had been embalmed. This custom of preserving the bodies of their dead, which we thus find in existence at the dawn of Egyptian civilisation, lasted without a break through the whole period of the nation's history down to the fourth century A.D. In what way it gave rise to the "Book of the Dead" is best described in Dr. Budge's own words:—

"As time went on the embalming of the dead was performed in a more elaborate manner, and at the same time the last resting place of the mummified body was chosen more carefully and wrought with greater attention. At a very early period the wealthy discarded the use of holes in rocks and caves as tombs, for in these the bodies were accessible to the attacks of enemies, and wild animals and serpents; and the same objection was,

naturally, made to shallow hollows made in the limestone and covered over with slabs of the same material, and also to the vaulted, crude brick graves which were commonly in use in the early dynasties. The place of these was taken by pyramids built of stone, and by many-chambered tombs hewn in the living rock. Experience, however, soon showed the Egyptian that the most carefully constructed tomb was incapable of preventing damp-rot or dry-rot and decay, and that some other power besides his own must be invoked to prevent the destruction of his body, which, though needing longer time to accomplish, was as effectually performed by these means as by the tooth of the wild animal or serpent, or by the hand of the enemy. At this stage the aid of the professional religious man or priest was called in, and the task of finding means to prevent rot and decay was entrusted to him. There is little doubt that when the body was laid to rest in the tomb, the priest pronounced certain words or formulæ or prayers over it, and it is probable that the recital of these words was accompanied by the performance of certain ceremonies. Whatever these formulæ were they formed the foundation of the 'Book of the Dead' of later Egyptian times."

This is a reasonable theory as to the origin of the work, and we think Dr. Budge is also justified in the further assumption that though these formulæ were first only recited, they were afterwards written down by the priests with a view to preserving them, and that the custom of inscribing portions of them on the walls of the tomb, and of writing them on the coffin and on papyri deposited in the tomb, followed from the subsequent belief that their efficacy was thus insured for the benefit of the deceased. In a series of eighteen plates Dr. Budge has illustrated the changes of form which the "Book of the Dead" underwent in the long course of its development from the time when we find it on the walls of the pyramids at Sakkāra, to its final deterioration in compositions of the Roman period. Its culmination in the illuminated papyri of the eighteenth dynasty is illustrated by means of three very beautiful coloured plates representing portions of the famous papyrus of Ani in the British Museum.

Another section of the introduction, which will prove useful to any one who attempts to understand the "Book of the Dead," is that which Dr. Budge devotes to its object and contents. He here classifies the chapters according to their subject-matter, and we thus gain an insight into the underlying unity of the work; for, though its chapters represent beliefs belonging to all ages in the life of the nation, the aim underlying them all is in some way or other to benefit the deceased. "They were intended," says Dr. Budge, "to give him the power to have and to enjoy life everlasting, to give him everything which he required in the life beyond the grave, to ensure his victory over his foes, to procure for him the power of going whithersoever he pleased and when and how he pleased, to preserve the mummy intact, and finally to enable his soul to enter into the bark of Rā or into whatever abode of the blessed had been conceived of by him." We have not space to enter into any adequate discussion of the exact nature of the ancient Egyptian's belief in a resurrection and a judgment, or to consider how far he advanced in his conception of monotheism. He never outgrew his belief in magic, and while undoubtedly advancing in his notions of a spiritual existence, he did not discard the more primitive tenets of an earlier age. It is constantly necessary to bear this

fact in mind in reading the "Book of the Dead." By his translation of the work, Dr. Budge has earned the gratitude of all students of the science of religion, for he has thereby placed within their reach a wealth of fresh material. For the benefit of those who are not Egyptologists, we are glad to note that the introduction and translation are issued as an independent work, and sold separately from the volumes containing the hieroglyphic text and vocabulary.

#### FERNS.

*Die Farnkräuter der Erde.* By Dr. H. Christ. Pp. viii + 388; with 291 figures. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1897.)

SINCE the publication of Baker's "Synopsis Filicum" in 1873 (Dr. Christ makes no mention of John Smith's "History of Ferns," 1877) no complete systematic account of the ferns has appeared, so that there is room for a work which embodies the more modern discoveries in this subdivision of plants. During this interval, Dr. Christ says a number of new species have become known, and, owing to the researches of G. Mettenius into the general structure of this subdivision, additional materials are to hand for the elaboration of a more natural arrangement. He believes that the older authors, including Hooker, too rigidly limited themselves to the consideration of the sorus and indusium for purposes of classification. Influenced by these reflections he has been led to change the arrangement adopted in the "Synopsis Filicum," in several cases, for what he regards as a more natural grouping. His view of the matter is, however, sometimes open to doubt. The position he assigns to the genus *Loxosoma* may be taken as an example of one of such alterations. He transfers it from the Hymenophyllaceæ to the Polypodiaceæ, apparently because its leaves have several layers of cells and are furnished with stomata. On the other hand, its sorus and indusium resemble those found in the Hymenophyllaceæ. An alteration like this may be defended or assailed according to the personal feeling of each systematist, and its criticism will depend on what morphological value each individual places on the various diagnostic characteristics. But it appears that the structure of the leaves, taken alone, would often be misleading. The leaves of a few of the Hymenophyllaceæ are several layers thick; while in the Osmundaceæ—a group, for the most part, possessed of stout leaves—*Leptopteris* has delicate and filmy leaves without stomata. The existence of the fossil *Palaeopteris hibernica*, which had leaves resembling *Loxosoma*, but in other respects belonging to the Hymenophyllaceæ, renders the connection of the latter genus to that class of ferns more probable.

Again, Dr. Christ removes *Ceratopteris thalictroides* (a plant which, by the way, is omitted in the index, but described in the text) from the Polypodiaceæ into a separate class, the Parkeriaceæ, without, it might be thought, sufficient reason. The anomalies in the structure of its vegetative organs may well be accounted for by its watery habitat, unique among the filices.

The two species of *Matonia* are placed in a separate group, as Baker suggested.